

**MINUTES  
STATE PRESERVES ADVISORY BOARD  
APRIL 2, 2004**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Neil Bernstein, Chair  
Robin Fortney  
Timothy Sproul  
Scott Moats  
Laura Jackson  
Liz Christiansen  
Kathy Gourley

**STAFF PRESENT**

John Pearson  
Daryl Howell  
Bill Johnson

**ADVISORS PRESENT**

Bob McKay  
Shirley Schermer

**BOARD TOUR**

The Board visited several sites nominated for preserve status on Thursday, April 1. The field trip began at 1:00 PM. Sites visited included the Hawkeye Wildlife Area, Sandy Beach Recreation Area, and Lake McBride State Park. The field trip was open to the public.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Neil Bernstein called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM on April 2, 2004 at the Johnson County Conservation Education Center.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Change:     Item 6 Review of Assessment Systems – change from an information item to a decision item.

Add:         Item 12a – Board members are to report on their visits to the preserves, copies were provided to staff -  
                    Laura Jackson – A F Miller  
                    Robin Fortney – Strasser Woods  
                    Neil Bernstein – Williams Prairie, Pallisades-Dows, Hanging Bog, Bixby, and Turkey River Mounds.

Add:         Item 3 Preserve Nomination updates – add Highway 100 - Rock Island

Add: Item 2b – Letter from Jeff Vonk concerning Liz Christiansen's appointment as the board liaison for the DNR

Add: Item 3 Preserve Nomination updates – Hardin County Grant Project – Information presented by Shirley Schermer.

Add: Thursday was the Field tour.

***Motion was made by Robin Fortney to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Laura Jackson. Motion carried unanimously.***

### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

***Motion was made by Robin Fortney to approve the minutes from the January 9, 2004 meeting. Seconded by Laura Jackson. Motion carried unanimously.***

Jeff Vonk has written the Preserve Board asking Liz Christiansen, DNR's Deputy Director to attend meetings and fully participate in all Preserve Board activities as the Director designates.

### **PRESERVE NOMINATION UPDATES**

**Banister-McGregor Woods** – The final report for the plant survey by Dean Roosa funded by the Preserves Board has been completed. A study area for evaluating road construction alternatives along the Lincoln Highway has been identified by Synder & Associates. A breeding bird survey has been completed along with a frog and toad survey for the Banister-McGregor property.

Bill and Delores McGregor still expressed their interest in preserve status for their property.

**Hartman Bluff** – Dedication papers have been signed by the County Conservation Board and Board of Supervisors of Black Hawk County. The main value of this preserve is educational and high level of management. This is considered an urban preserve.

John Pearson said that he is trying to arrange for a dedication ceremony with the County Conservation Board.

**Rock Island** – Neil Bernstein said that two weeks ago a lawsuit filed by the City of Cedar Rapids against Linn County Conservation Board was rejected by the courts. The city argued that they had the right to review the property transaction between the private developer and the Conservation Board and to insist that right of way for HWY 100 be included in the land transfer. This does not affect Rock Island Preserve, only the three areas being proposed for preserve status.

Neil Bernstein said that Terry Vanderwall is continuing reptile studies for IDOT. There will be more data coming in.

Representatives of the Linn County Conservation Board spoke about their work to gain preserve status for the property. Laura Jackson was concerned that statements by the media were confusing the existing preserve with the proposed preserve status for the three properties, and she wanted to make sure that naming the three parcels of the county preserve the same as the existing preserve didn't add to the confusion.

<b><i>Information Only</i></b>
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### **HARDIN COUNTY GRANT PROJECT**

Shirley Schermer presented information and provided a handout of the Hardin County Project. In 2003, the Hardin County Preservation Commission received a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation from its Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation. A management and educational plan is being developed for the archaeological resources of Hardin County to assist in their protection in the face of future development. The plan will provide both immediate and long-term options for the stewardship of archeological sites on both public and private lands, including both voluntary and regulatory strategies. Numerous partners include federal, state, and local agencies, private landowners and professional archaeologists and preservationists in Iowa. Future implementation of the plan will rely upon continued partnerships between these and others with vested interest in the archaeological resources of the county.

Public land-holding agencies and private landowners will be offered recommended "best practices" options for site recognition, recording (inventory and evaluation), maintenance, stabilization and long-term protection. Landowners will receive these materials in a separate educational packet, to be updated regularly and transferred with the land as property changes ownership. The current plan is to provide the Hardin County Conservation Board and the Hardin County Historic Preservation Commission streamlined access to the Iowa state site records via the UI-OSA *I-Sites* program, information from the State Historic Preservation Office on surveyed areas, and inclusion by UI-OSA in a site modeling project called Landmass.

The IDNR has been involved with meetings where discussions have involved including Pine Lake State Park in the project. Since there are three state preserves in Hardin County, It would make sense to include information on them as well.

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**COLD WATER CAVE**

A cave system with over 15 miles of passage and an underground stream has become the focus of a controversy over access shafts and trail construction. The stream flowing through the cave exists at Cold Water Spring State Preserve.

John Pearson said that the entire cave could be looked at as a potential preserve. It would be a highly extensive project involving dozens and dozens of landowners, but it is truly unique among Iowa and the nation. The Preserve owns about 60 acres in the Cold Water Spring State Preserve. We probably only owe just a few yards of the cave entrance.

Michael Bounk gave a summary of the access/ownership rights and existence of Cold Water cave and the explorations of John Ackerman.

John Pearson will be visiting the cave in a few weeks. He will give pictures and additional information to board members.

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**LOESS HILLS STUDY**

Senate File 2282 is a bill requiring the Loess Hills Development and Conservation Authority in consultation with the State Preserves Advisory Board to conduct a study to determine the archaeological and paleontological significance of the loess hills and to determine the feasibility of designating an area of the loess hills as a prairie preserve.

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## **REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS**

A summary of several assessment schemes for preserve areas used by public and private conservation organizations will be presented.

Neil Bernstein said that he wrote to the state of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois versions of State Preserves authorities and asked them if they had any methods of assessing and prioritizing incoming data about potential preserves. No responses have been received yet.

Laura Jackson said that this type of an assessment would be performed by a group like us. There are two objectives. One is to figure out what the threats to the Preserves, any management weakness and to try to better manage the Preserves and protecting them from the threats. Secondly, the other use of these assessments is as a lobbying and advocacy tool for more support of the protected area system. An assessment like this would give us data/evidence to support any request for support from the state. There is a grant that could be applied for to do an assessment of the preserve system.

***Motion was made by Liz Christiansen to submit a grant application. Seconded by Robin Fortney. Motion carried.***

## **SEED HARVEST REQUEST**

Bill Johnson of DNR Wildlife Bureau wishes to hand harvest prairie seed from Cayler Prairie. The area to be harvesting is one burn unit, which is 35 acres. The manager at Cayler said that 8-10 acres are actually harvestable.

***Motion was made by Liz Christiansen to allow harvest of prairie seed from Cayler State Park. Seconded by Scott Moats. Motion carried.***

***Motion was made by Kathy Gourley to allow hand harvest of prairie seed at the other proposed preserve sites. Seconded by Tim Sproul. Motion carried.***

## **RESEARCH REQUESTS**

Jessica Skibbe, graduate student at Iowa State University, was granted permission to conduct butterfly surveys on five preserves.

Benjamin Montgomery, graduate student at the University of Michigan, is requesting permission to continue studying leafy spurge on state preserves.

*Embere Hall* wishes to expand research approved last year to study birds and snakes at Cayler and Anderson prairie preserves.

***Motion was made by Robin Fortney to approve all proposals. Seconded by Liz Christiansen. Motion carried.***

### **VOLUNTEER PROJECTS**

In cooperation with Sierra Club chapters, workdays to pull garlic mustard have been organized at Brush Creek Canyon (Saturday, May 22, 10 AM) and White Pine Hollow (May 23, 1 PM).

The Board Members do appreciate the work and efforts put forth by all volunteers.

### ***Information Only***

### **FRIENDS GROUP**

Merry Rankin, DNR Volunteer Coordinator has agreed to post the guidelines for Friends of the Preserve on the DNR website under the Volunteer Group. She will also be the first mediator for how a person can become a volunteer. We need to next promote the idea to our various groups.

### ***Information Only***

### **PROPOSAL SELECTION**

Copies of the proposals and the scoring information were reviewed by the board members.

This table indicates the 8 proposals that were chosen for funding. (19 applied)

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Olsen (3) – Butterfly Survey of Hayden Prairie	3,788
Cady – Floristic Inventory of Cedar Bluffs	3,052
Cady – Floristic Inventory of Pecan Grove	1,576
Minger – Soil Study at Steele Prairie	4,000
Freese – Floristic Inventory of Hardin City	1,706
Watson – Turkey River Mounds	3,049
Rosburg – Floristic Inventory of 2 Preserves	10,850
Birmingham and Others – Aquatic Fauna Survey of 6 preserves	3,225

Liz Christiansen abstained from scoring.

***Motion was made by Robin Fortney to select the top 8 projects as noted above for funding. Seconded by Scott Moats. Motion carried.***

### **OPEN DISCUSSION**

Neil Bernstein presented reports on preserves from Williams Prairie, Palisades-Dows, Hanging Bog, Bixby and Turkey River Mounds.

Other reports presented from board members included Strasser Woods and Miller Preserve.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next Preserves Board meeting will be held on July 2, 2004 in Johnson County.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to come before the State Preserves Advisory Board, Chairperson Neil Bernstein adjourned the meeting on April 2, 2004.

***Motion was made by Robin Fortney to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Laura Jackson. Motion carried.***

**A**  
Adjournment, 6  
approve agenda, 1  
approve minutes, 2

**B**  
Board Members Present, 1

**C**  
call to order, 1  
Cold Water Cave, 4

**F**  
Friends group, 6

**H**  
Hardin county grant project, 3

**L**  
Loess Hills Study, 4

**N**  
next meeting, 6

**O**  
Open Discussion, 6

**P**  
Preserve Nomination updates, 2  
proposal selection, 6

**R**  
Research requests, 5  
Review of Assessment systems, 4

**S**  
Seed harvest request, 5  
staff present, 1

**V**  
volunteer projects, 5